

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This is a Response to the Office Action mailed June 14, 2006, in which a three (3) month Shortened Statutory Period for Response has been set, due to expire September 14, 2006. Fifty-nine (59) claims, including seven (7) independent claims, were paid for in the application. Claims 27-30 and 32-34 have been canceled. Claim 31 is currently amended. No new matter has been added to the application. No fee for additional claims is due by way of this Amendment. The Director is authorized to charge any additional fees due by way of this Amendment, or credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 19-1090. Claims 1-26, 31 and 35-59 are pending.

Objections

Claim 31 was objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim. As suggested by the Examiner, Claim 31 has been rewritten in independent form to include all limitations of the base claim. Claim 31 is thus allowable. It is noted that in rewriting the claim in independent form, the scope of the claim has not changed and the amendment should not be considered as narrowing the scope of claim 31.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 27, 29-30 and 32-34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,645,327 to Austin et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,564,846 to Katsumata. Claims 27, 29-30 and 32-34 are hereby canceled.

Conclusion

Applicants thank the Examiner for allowing claims 1-26 and 35-59, and for indicating the allowable subject matter of claim 31. In light of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims are allowable. Applicants,

therefore, respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider this application and timely allow all pending claims. Examiner Lieu is encouraged to contact Mr. Abramonte by telephone to discuss the above if desired. If the Examiner notes any informalities in the claims, she is encouraged to contact Mr. Abramonte by telephone to expediently correct such informalities.

Respectfully submitted,
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